

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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CAST Moves to June

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The California Spring Trials, normally held in late March or early April, is officially moving to the end of June in 2021, making it the California Summer Trials.

The new dates? Wednesday, June 23 through Sunday, June 27, 2021.

Why the date change? Direct request from the majority of seed and plant brokers that attend, we're told. The event's traditional date has always been a busy time for the reps and for their customers. You can't leave your territory when a customer may have a crisis. By late June, nobody needs to see their broker.

Plus, growers and retailers will have a better opportunity to attend. Early summer is a good time of year to have quality finished product to show and allows for a greater diversity of crops, such as perennials and heat-loving annuals, to be shown under more normal growing conditions (of course, the opposite is true for cool-season annuals). Lastly, the later date also helps in assuring the event takes place, as the longer it's delayed, the better likelihood it won't be cancelled due to COVID-19.

Here's a list of the breeding companies currently set to participate in the new Summer Trials next year: Ball FloraPlant; Beekenkamp; Cohen; Danziger; Darwin Perennials; Dümmer Orange; Green Fuse Botanicals; Hem Genetics; Hishtil; Jaldety; Kamel; Kieft Seed; Monrovia; Nir Nurseries; PAC Elsner; Pacific Plug & Liner; PanAmerican Seed; PlantHaven International; Prudac; Royal van Zanten; Schoneveld; Selecta One; Suntory Flowers; Syngenta; Takii; Think Plants; Vivero Internacional; and Westhoff.

Notable absences thus far: Benary and Sakata. (Of course, Proven Winners had already dropped out of Trials).

As we heard the story, one of the other ideas proposed by the brokers was that the event be held in a single location—such as at a fairground in big tents. The breeders said no to that for many reasons, including the cost and the loss of the unique traits of exhibiting in their own greenhouses.

We also heard that getting the breeders above to go along with the change was like herding cats. It took numerous meetings of various groups, all of whom had their own ideas about a good date. Finally, a few of the biggest trials, including PanAmerican Seed and Dümmer, said, "We have to do something. This is the date we're picking."

Well, the Bobbleheads will be there! And if the date doesn't work out and they move it back to spring? Well, we'll be there, too. **GT**